



UP IN FLAMES

ISABEL RINGROSE ON 10 YEARS SINCE THE RIOTS THAT FOLLOWED THE POLICE KILLING OF MARK DUGGAN >>Pages 10&11

TUNISIA IN TURMOIL

COUP DANGER >>Pages 14&15

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2766 | 4 - 10 August 2021 | socialistworker.co.uk

● **SECRET MILLIONAIRE DONORS' CLUB LETS RICH CONTROL POLICY**

● **CONTRACTS HANDED TO CRONIES**

CORRUPT TORIES TAKE GOLD



MIGRANTS

Deportations show brutality of Tory laws

THE TORIES are pressing ahead with a "summer season" of deportations. The Home Office deported 21 people to Vietnam last week—including some believed to be victims of human trafficking. The charter flight from Birmingham was the second to the south Asian country in a matter of months.

>>Page 3

HEALTH



NHS workers begin voting on action over pay

THOUSANDS OF health workers received online ballot papers this week asking them if they are prepared to take industrial action over pay.

Members of Unison, the largest health union, are being asked whether they accept the government's appalling 3 percent pay offer.

>>Page 4

PALESTINE

Israeli settlers claim Palestinian homes and land

ISRAEL'S SUPREME court on Monday discussed the eviction case that sparked the Palestinian uprising earlier this year.

Protests in May against the evictions turned into one of the biggest Palestinian revolts in decades.

>>Page 20



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I call it access capitalism'

Mohamed Amersi, a millionaire who got to meet Prince Charles after donating to the Tory party

'It is like whisky: you push to see how high you can raise the price'

Leading Tory on collecting donations for access

'Theresa May made £500,000 in a year from speaking. I'd pay £500,000 not to hear her speak'

A Tory minister on the money to be made by prime ministers

'The top donors are Thatcherite free marketeers. They're fed up with all this state intervention'

One Tory who attended the fundraisers describes the money men's motivation

'Willing slave to the stars'

How Tory co-chair Ben Elliot describes himself

'I just can't afford to do this job'

Boris Johnson complains he is short of cash



New secret club of millionaire Conservative donors revealed

A SECRET club for major Tory donors has been holding regular meetings and calls with prime minister Boris Johnson and the chancellor Rishi Sunak.

Members of the club—known as the “Advisory Board”—have given at least £250,000 each to the party.

It was developed by Ben Elliot, Tory co-chair, as a means of connecting major backers with its top Tories.

The club does not appear in party literature.

But officials confirmed to the Financial Times that the Advisory Board “occasionally” meets with Johnson and Sunak “for an update on the political landscape”.

One person briefed on the Advisory Board’s activities said it held monthly meetings or conference calls with either the prime minister or the chancellor.

Some members have used those discussions to call for public spending cuts and lower taxes, a donor said.

Elliot is a founder of the Quintessentially



JOHNSON AND Elliot

“concierge” service for the rich and the lobbying and PR company Hawthorn Advisors. He hosted a drinks party at banker Rishi Khosla’s home at which Johnson mingled with leading donors.

Mohamed Amersi, a businessman and Tory donor, told the Financial Times the club was “like the very elite Quintessentially clients membership—one needs to cough up £250,000 per annum or be a friend of Ben”.

A person with knowledge of the Advisory Board said that although giving £250,000 did not guarantee membership

it was essentially “a donors group”. Supporters of Elliot say the Conservatives have long had a “Leaders Group”, where donors who give £50,000 are offered regular meetings with ministers.

The Advisory Board operates at a more rarefied level, with some members giving the party five times that amount.

Eight Tory donors wrote cheques of exactly £250,000 in 2020 and three donors have given that amount so far in 2021. Three donors have given that specific amount so far in 2021.

Those who have given at least that sum in 2020 or 2021 include Lubov Chernukhin, the wife of former Russian minister Vladimir Chernukhin.

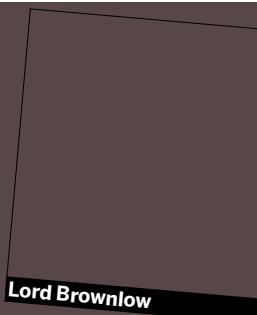
They also include hedge fund manager Alan Howard, and Rosemary Said, wife of Wafic Said, who is known for his role in the Britain-Saudi al-Yamamah arms sale.

The Tories say, “Government policy is in no way influenced by the donations the party receives.”

Which would mean the rich are wasting their money if true.

LORD BROWNLOW, a Tory patron of successive prime ministers, said £58,000 would be paid into party coffers “to cover the payments the party has already made on behalf of the soon to be formed Downing Street trust”.

The trust was never formed, nor the donation declared, but the Conservative Party has insisted that all reportable donations had been “correctly declared”. It says the party had “long provided assistance” to serving prime ministers. Lord Geidt, Johnson’s adviser on standards, ruled that the Johnson had not broken any rules.



Lord Brownlow

ADVISORY Board members were at the home of Rishi Khosla—a banker—on 28 June. Those milling with Johnson over drinks and canapes included Peter Cruddas, the online trading tycoon who gave the Tories £500,000 days after being made a peer. Another guest was Howard Shore, the founder of Shore Capital who gave the party £250,000 this year.

Royal nephew linked to Johnson by Eton and cash

BEN ELLIOT runs Quintessentially, a “concierge” company that caters to the whims of the rich. This includes shipping a dozen albino peacocks to a party for Jennifer Lopez and airlifting elm tea bags to Madonna.

Johnson appointed Elliot as the Tory party’s co-chair. Elliot, the nephew of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is at the centre of providing cash to the Tories.

The Etonians meet regularly, duelling on the tennis or squash court.

Elliot and Johnson have long moved in the same social circle. Elliot regularly played poker with Ben and Zac Goldsmith, at Crown London Aspinalls, a private



Ben Elliot

gaming club in Mayfair.

Johnson was also part of the black-tie Aspinall clique.

Damian Aspinall, son of the club’s founder, runs an animal conservation charity that recently hired Johnson’s wife Carrie as head of communications. Money and Eton tie the group together.

Elliot usually pitches for money in a “mockney” accent, adopting what he thinks is working class patois.

Property developers dig deep for Johnson

SOME OF the biggest donations secured for the party come from property companies. They would be major beneficiaries of Johnson’s promise to rip up planning laws to allow more housebuilding.

Donors with property interests and links to development have given the party at least £17.9 million since Johnson became prime minister.

The proportion of money backing the Tories from the property sector has soared in recent years to a quarter of all donations.

That’s up from the previous high of



JCB Boss Bramford

12 percent of party income enjoyed under Johnson’s predecessor, Theresa May.

Alarm bells then must sound as Johnson is trying to push through a contentious overhaul of planning rules that aims to build 300,000 houses a year. It’s a policy from which the party’s biggest backers will benefit.

FIGURE IT OUT

£17.9 MILLION

Amount that donors with property interests and links to development have given the Conservative Party since Johnson became prime minister

£275,000

Johnson’s annual earnings as a Daily Telegraph columnist, penning articles on a weekly basis

£4,250

His monthly rental income from Grade II-listed cottage in Thame, Oxfordshire

£88,000

Minimum amount Johnson received as an advance for his book Shakespeare—The Riddle of Genius

£37.4 MILLION

Amount the Tory party raised in ‘large’ donations in the year running up to Johnson’s 2019 victory

£2.7 MILLION

Johnson’s outside earnings over his eight years at City Hall

£1.2 MILLION

Purchase price of Johnson and Symonds’ house in Camberwell, south London

£157,372

Prime minister’s annual salary

£830,000

Amount Johnson earned in his last year as a backbench MP before becoming prime minister

£450,000

Earnings for 21 hours of public speaking in just over seven months in 2018-19

£58,000

Donation from Tory patron Lord Brownlow, allegedly to pay for Downing Street refurbishments

Get in touch with Socialist Worker

Email reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Web www.socialistworker.co.uk

Facebook “Socialist Worker (Britain)”

Twitter @socialistworker

Newsdesk 020 7840 5656
Circulation 020 7840 5601

Write to Socialist Worker
PO Box 74955
London E16 9EJ

Deportations show the brutality of Tory rules

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE TORIES are pressing ahead with a “summer season” of deportations.

The Home Office deported 21 people to Vietnam last week—including some believed to be victims of human trafficking.

Immigration lawyers began a legal challenge on Monday.

Tom Nunn of the Duncan Lewis firm says a “large number of Vietnamese nationals are being placed in this sped-up asylum process” despite “showing clear indicators of trafficking.”

One 20 year old woman, who was granted a last-minute reprieve before the flight took off, was brought to Britain four years ago for labour exploitation.

The charter flight from Birmingham was the second to the South Asian country in a matter of months.

The Home Office plans to forcibly remove refused asylum seekers and people who’ve lived in Britain since childhood in the next few weeks.

A flight to Zimbabwe took off last week. But after legal challenges it left with only one-third of the people the Tories wanted to deport.

Meanwhile, the Home Office—according to its data—is targeting people from Caribbean countries for deportation if they have a criminal record.

Average

Ghanaian and Nigerian nationals are also removed at a high rate than average, according to the same figures which were obtained by the Guardian newspaper.

The Home Office plans flights to both countries next month.

The Tories are using the UK Borders Act 2007. The racist law, pushed



A protest against a charter deportation flights in London in 2020

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

through by Tony Blair’s Labour government, made migrants sentenced to 12 months or more in prison eligible for automatic deportation on release.

Exceptions include having children in Britain and being victims of trafficking. But black and Asian people are far more likely to be handed long prison sentences because of police and state racism.

For instance, young black men were nine times more likely to be jailed in England and Wales than young whites, according to Ministry

of Justice (MoJ) analysis in 2018. On average 65 percent of overseas nationals jailed for at least 12 months were deported, according to Home Office and MoJ data between 2015 and 2020.

This doesn’t include people from European Economic Area countries, which are not included in the act.

For Jamaican nationals, this rose to 75 percent. It was 90 percent for Nigerian nationals, 76 percent for Ghanaians, 90 percent for Albanians and 84 percent for Vietnamese nationals. Under a deal agreed with

Jamaica last year, the Home Office should no longer remove Jamaican nationals who moved to Britain before the age of 12.

But people thought to be rounded up for a flight next month include a man who has lived in Britain since the age of 11.

The Tories are making it harder for migrants and refugees to come to Britain—and to live and stay here even after many years.

Anti-racists have to fight to stop the flights—and to dismantle Britain’s racist immigration system.

MPs throw millions down the drain

THE HOUSE of Commons has written off £70 million of wasted work on a temporary chamber to rehouse MPs amid uncertainty about the future of plans to refurbish parliament.

In its annual report the Commons revealed that it had to write off £70.2 million of work on constructing a temporary chamber as a “constructive loss” amid “increased uncertainty” about restoration plans.

MPs had been due to vacate the Houses of Parliament to allow work to take place.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, Tory Leader of the House of Commons all

but tried to stop that, labelling the proposition as “fanciful”.

But the £4 billion scheme is going ahead.

So the temporary works for MPs have been halted and the £70 million cost so far ignored.

Meanwhile, peers, MPs and their staff have complained about sewage leaks, freezing temperatures and a damaged dispatch box over the past months.

Hundreds of repair jobs haven’t been resolved in half a year. That has included complaints of modified cheese trolleys and an ice cream trolley with a broken wheel.

Rees-Mogg

Biffa’s dirty secret

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

BRITAIN’S LARGEST waste company, Biffa, has been fined over £1 million for dumping tonnes of rubbish in India and Indonesia.

The company has been charged with breaking international law by sending the rubbish.

To try and get around the ban Biffa would label rubbish as “paper” at its depot in north London.

But in reality, the waste included soiled nappies, food packaging, and plastics.

Investigators from the Environment Agency

Waste labelled as paper

prevented 16 containers filled with rubbish from being sent overseas between 2018 and 2019.

But the agency admitted that at least 26 containers were able to leave the Southampton port.

Recycled

Biffa’s abuses point to a wider problem. Both India and Indonesia have largely welcomed paper imports, which are ground down and recycled in paper mills.

But firms are abusing this and in Biffa’s case falsely labelling its containers.

According to a report by India’s National Green Tribunal at least 100,000 tonnes of non-recyclable plastic are being exported.

This waste finds its way to landfill sites where it sits for decades.

This is also damaging for those who live around landfills and rubbish incinerators.

The burning of paper bails—which contain plastics that weren’t disclosed by the senders—pumps out toxins into the air.

The uncovering of Biffa’s dirty secret shows that bosses in the West are still content with shipping our waste off to developing countries, no matter the cost to the planet or to people’s health.

Socialist Worker

For daily updates and the stories that matter socialistworker.co.uk



- Download WhatsApp to your phone
- Save 07377 632 826 as Socialist Worker WhatsApp
- Send ‘start’ to the number



Thousands of NHS staff begin voting on action over pay

THOUSANDS OF health workers received online ballot papers this week asking them if they are prepared to take industrial action over pay.

Members of Unison, the largest health union, are being asked whether they accept the government's appalling 3 percent pay offer.

They are also being consulted as to whether they are prepared to take "lawful industrial action" to win more.

The union's leadership has told members that 3 percent is "not acceptable".

Jordan Rivera, a leading activist from Homerton hospital, says that the battle now is to ensure the biggest possible vote for action.

"We got until 10 September to get the votes in," she told Socialist Worker. "And we've got to be ambitious"

"The most important thing is to start talking about the pay campaign to everyone you work with.

"Voting is taking place online, so there is a great opportunity to get colleagues to vote there and then."

Angry

"People are so angry about everything that has happened to us during the pandemic. This is a chance to show the government just what we think".

The ballot is also a great opportunity to sign people up to the union, says Jordan.

"When you go to Unison's online site you can click on a button to vote if you are already a member. But you can also click another button to join the union and then vote."

Unison activists are planning to run lunchtime stalls outside hospital



A fight is coming in the NHS

BACK STORY

Health unions are gearing up for action over the Tories' insulting 3 percent NHS pay rise

●The Unison and GMB unions are asking members if they are prepared to take industrial action

●The nurses' RCN union is set to follow

●Smaller health unions could soon join them

canteens, with laptops so people can vote or join up there and then.

Many branches are holding online meetings to let everyone know about how the pay fight is progressing.

And they also are planning ward rounds to spread the word among nurses and nursing assistants.

Encouraging

The GMB union this week announced it would also be balloting over NHS pay. It recommends its members reject the Tories' 3 percent.

The nurses' RCN union also appears ready to ballot.

It has been taking part in a "Summer of Action" series of protests and is encouraging members to join campaigns.

It is hosting a major online rally next week and says information about voting will be released shortly.

Jordan says the mood for action is so strong that even NHS workplaces with low levels of union organisation can get involved.

"My advice to anyone in a weaker workplace who wants to fight is to chat about pay with everyone you work with," she said. "And go online to the various forums.

"Ask if anyone in your area wants to get in touch. You'll easily find others that want to get involved. From there, you can get campaigning."

With the Tories deeply unpopular on the health service, and NHS workers furious about what they've been put through, there could hardly be a better time to strike.

Unison members employed by the NHS in England can vote at nhs.pay.org



HEALTH WORKERS and supporters marching over pay in central London last week

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

Health workers rage at Tory pay insult on Downing Street protest

AROUND 200 health workers and their supporters joined a march to Downing Street last Friday to protest against the Tory pay insult.

Patricia, a staff nurse, told Socialist Worker she feels "under appreciated" and "at breaking point".

"The government offered us 1 percent and then they offered three," said. "Both offers are insulting when health workers are suffering so much already."

Workers gathered at St Thomas hospital, near parliament, to bring their anger to the Tories.

Protesters chanted, "1,2,3,4,5—Keep our NHS alive," and, "Boris Johnson, hear us shout, pay us properly or get out," as they marched to Downing Street.

Malcolm, another nurse, said that the crisis is having a devastating impact on workers' morale. "We are tens of thousands of nurses short," he told Socialist Worker.

"I'm seeing people I know leaving.

"Some can't even pay for childcare or rent" he added.

"Things are just getting worse



The RCN union joined the protest

pay—it was about conditions too. "At the moment resources are so stretched," she told Socialist Worker.

"There is literally a shortage of stationery in my hospital—that's how bad it is."

Unions are pushing for different pay increases, but grassroots health worker activists are demanding a 15 percent pay rise.

Many workers stressed the need for unions to take united action to force a substantial pay rise from the Tory government.

Janet, a nurse and Unison union rep, told the crowd just how important it was to vote for strikes.

"Today is the first day we in Unison have received our consultative papers about whether to take action," she said.

"I implore everyone who hasn't joined a union to join and to vote yes to strikes."

Health workers need to keep up momentum in workplaces, with protests and campaigning, to build for a big strike vote.

As Patricia said, "We can't sit and talk, we need to keep protesting and piling on the pressure."

Tory Ken Clarke labelled 'a disgrace' at blood inquiry

TORY FORMER health secretary Ken Clarke has been branded a "total disgrace" over his behaviour at infected blood scandal inquiry hearings last week.

Lord Clarke appeared before the inquiry as a witness but could not hide his disdain for it, complaining of his "exasperation" at "pointless" and "irrelevant" questions.

The inquiry is into one of the most devastating and shameful events in the history of the NHS.

Almost 3,000 people died after being treated with blood products infected with hepatitis C and HIV in the late 1970s and 1980s.

A cover-up operation followed, and so far no one has been held to account.

Clarke, who was first a junior minister and then health secretary during the long reign of Margaret Thatcher, is thought by campaigners to be a central figure in the story.

Yet the peer used his appearance to talk of "absurd tabloid spin", and contested the meaning of the minutes of meetings of his former department.

Important

At one point, he asked, "Why do we have to go through such meticulous detail through who said what when, when did he change his mind?"

He added that it was "interesting" but "pretty pointless". But the detail is important.

While a health minister, Clarke is on record saying, "It has been suggested that Aids may be transmitted in blood or blood products, there is no conclusive proof that this is so. Nevertheless I can well appreciate the concern that this suggestion may cause."

He told the inquiry that the government was right to say in 1983 that there was "no conclusive proof" that Aids could be transmitted by blood



Tory former health secretary Ken Clarke

products because it was not firmly established until some years later.

But inquiry documents show senior health officials in his department thought it likely HIV could be carried in blood. The HIV virus can cause Aids.

Tranmission

Jenni Richards QC asked Clarke why the phrase "blood products are a likely cause of transmission of Aids" was not used instead.

It was, she said, the "mainstream view" in the department of health at that time, according to earlier testimony from Dr Diana Walford, a former deputy chief medical officer for England.

Clarke replied, "You'll have to ask Diana Walford that."

Jason Evans, who was at the inquiry, was not impressed. His father died of Aids in 1993 after being convinced by doctors to continue using a blood product that many were speculating was contaminated.

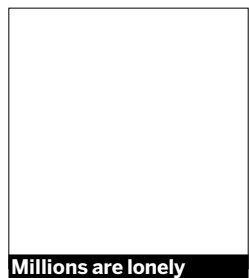
"Clarke has no respect for this inquiry or anyone involved in it," he told the BBC. He said Clarke had been a "total disgrace" during the week. The inquiry will return to take more evidence in September.

Report finds epidemic of loneliness in England

PEOPLE'S wellbeing is on the decline in England, according to a new report.

The number of adults feeling lonely has increased since 2017 and in the last year jumped by 44 percent from 2.6 million to 3.7 million.

Meanwhile, trust in the government is at an all-time low after a near 40 percent drop from 2018. Analysis by the Carnegie UK Trust uses official statistics to produce an alternative measure of social progress, called Gross Domestic Wellbeing. It is important to



Millions are lonely

note that the report says the decline in wellbeing started before the pandemic. And the charity also warns wellbeing will get worse not better.

According to this measure of whether life is getting better or worse, England's score was 6.79 out of 10 for

2019-20 compared to 6.89 for 2018-19.

The trust argues that giving preference to economic data doesn't take into account how people are feeling about their lives, and so another measure is necessary. But the Gross Domestic Wellbeing index is itself being severely hampered by delays in publishing official data relating to people's welfare.

While economic data takes the Office for National Statistics some eight months to process, social data can take more than a year and a half.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

EASING TRAVEL RULES PUTS PROFIT BEFORE HEALTH

FOLLOWING immense pressure from travel industry tycoons, Britain's international travel restrictions will be eased. But despite the Tories talk of reuniting friends and families across borders, the easing of restrictions has one main purpose—profit.

Boris Johnson was questioning whether to introduce a new tier, an amber watchlist, to the government's traffic light travel system.

The new category would have warned people that their destination could shift quickly from amber to red, which requires travellers to quarantine in a hotel.

But following backlash from the travel industry Johnson scrapped the proposals saying he wants a "user friendly" system to get the "travel industry moving again".

These plans are not in the interest of people's health.

Bosses don't want passengers knowing if restrictions may change, forcing them to quarantine because it would damage profits.

That was made clear by the chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Future of Aviation, Tory MP Henry

Smith, who urged the government to rule out the amber watchlist plan.

The watering-down of travel restrictions could have a devastating impact on the spread of coronavirus in Britain.

Passengers arriving from amber countries, who have been fully vaccinated in Europe and the US, will not have to quarantine when entering Britain.

After Japan similarly eased international travel restrictions for the Olympic Games, it fuelled a fourth wave of Covid-19.

The change to travel restrictions is just one of many reckless moves by a Tory government guided by the interests of profit. It has decided



The easing of restrictions will increase the chances of virus mutations

Smith, who urged the government to rule out the amber watchlist plan.

The app will now "ping" fewer people who have come into contact with someone carrying the virus, allowing more to go without self-isolating.

The Tories hope that this will put an end to the so-called "pingdemic". This saw hundreds of thousands of people asked to self-isolate, triggering acute staff shortages in supermarkets, retail, hospitality logistics and many other sectors.

But the real problem was never a faulty app pinging people too many times. It was the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the wake of the Tories lifting coronavirus restrictions on 19 July.

Fewer people self-isolating will not help slow coronavirus. And Covid spreading could lead to mutations, which are more resistant to the vaccine.

This threatens to pile more pressure onto an NHS at breaking point—just as the Tories demoralised workers further with the 3 percent pay insult.

We need a much bigger fightback—against the Tories and for a system that puts people above profit.

have had to flee, especially around major Afghan cities that the Taliban is fighting to capture.

Now, some pundits blame the violence on the withdrawal—they believe that there can be no peace in Afghanistan without Western armies.

Some argue for the West to stay on somehow, with airstrikes in support of the Afghan army.

It's a shameful reversal of the truth.

For more than 100 years, competing imperial powers have

fought over Afghanistan. The fighting has always been part of a bigger competition for land, resources and markets.

The invasion in 2001 was just part of a bigger attempt to assert the US's control over Asia and the Middle East. It failed badly—and ordinary people ultimately paid the biggest price.

The fighting is the latest chapter in a saga of war and invasion. It won't end until the invaders and occupiers leave Afghanistan alone.



Sign up to our morning newsletter Breakfast in Red and get the latest news every day.

For updates and analysis on the stories that matter go to socialistworker.co.uk/breakfastinred

ANALYSIS

YURI PRASAD



The right's war on Critical Race Theory

WHY IS a low level war raging in the US on the subject of Critical Race Theory?

In the battle for the state governor of Virginia, the phrase is almost permanently on the lips of the billionaire Republican candidate Glenn Youngkin. He said recently that he would ban the theory "on day one" if elected.

Republican states across the land are moving fast to outlaw this apparently dangerous incarnation of "Marxism".

Critical Race Theory, a body of ideas once confined to university campuses, seeks to explain the devastating patterns of racism in past and present US societies.

It insists that oppression is not the result of flawed individuals, but is instead "systematic".

Its popularity with activists has grown alongside the Black Lives Matter movement, but until recently it was a phrase barely used in the mainstream. The theory has, however, started to influence some educators, pushing them to think more deeply about how they teach US history and its values. And that infuriates the Donald Trump supporting right wing.

If there must be lessons on the racist New York draft riots or the murder of Civil Rights Movement activists, "both sides" of history must be taught, they insist.

Otherwise, they say, schools will be able to "brainwash" pupils. "The phrase 'Critical Race Theory' connotes hostile, academic, divisive, race-obsessed, poisonous, elitist, anti-American," said Christopher Rufo, the right wing ideologue who claims to have initiated the attack.

Partly this type of "culture war" politics suits the Republicans well. It distracts its voter base from the growing crisis in its heartlands.

Mortgage foreclosures and evictions are set to spread like a virus as the Covid moratorium on them is lifted this month. It will hit thousands of people who probably still describe themselves as middle class and many who put their faith in Trump.

Trouble

Already some 1.75 million homeowners are in trouble with their lenders. Posing anti-racism as some sort of existential threat is in part a diversion from the failures of Trumpism. But in the battle with theory, there is something more fundamental at stake—the whole basis of the "American Dream".

The much vaunted idea that the US is uniquely a society in which anyone, from anywhere, can become somebody—rich, powerful, famous—is a core part of the ruling ideology.

The myth was used to suggest that every individual reached their station in life according to their intelligence and effort.

And abroad, the US's claim to be a truly meritocratic society was used as part of the Cold War.

But the radical movement that followed the murder of George Floyd has made such fantasies far less tenable.

Millions of people in the US—black and white—see the way generations of oppression have disadvantaged black people. They see that talk of a colour blind society and a level playing field is bullshit.

They've been prepared to take to the streets and fight heavily armed cops over the issue, and they've demonstrated a thirst for knowledge. Never have anti-racist books flown off the shelves so fast.

With that in mind, sections of the ruling class aligned to the Democrats have moved tactically on Critical Race Theory—by seeking to nullify its potentially more radical implications.

That's why early in his presidency Joe Biden overturned Trump's ban on the theory.

It's also why the chair of the joint chiefs of staff, General Mark Milley, last month defended the study of the theory in the military. He said he wanted to "understand white rage".

"What is wrong with understanding, having some situational understanding about the country for which we are here to defend?" he went on.

The Democrats want to turn the discussion of structural racism into a far safer dialogue about reforming racism out of the system.

Yet, at its most useful, Critical Race Theory can point in exactly the opposite direction—that to get rid of racism we need to get rid of the system that breeds it.

Almost 200 people died after contact with cops last year

by SIMON BASKTTER

AT LEAST 190 people died after contact with the police in England and Wales last year.

Some 19 people died in police custody or shortly after being released.

The tame cop watchdog, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), said two thirds were experiencing mental distress at the time of their deaths.

Of the 19 people who died in 2020-21, 17 were men and two were women. They were between 24 and 85 years old. Seventeen were white and two were black.

The IOPC said police used force or restraint against 12 of the 19 people, but it apparently "did not necessarily contribute to the deaths".

One person was shot dead by police this year.

There were 25 deaths in police-related car crashes and 54 suicides after people were held in custody.

Another 92 other deaths following contact with the police were investigated. In eight of those, restraint was used by the police.

The previous figures, 2019-20, saw 18 deaths in or following police custody, three police shootings, 24 deaths related to road traffic incidents and 54 apparent suicides following custody.

Concerns

The IOPC also investigated 107 "other" deaths following contact with the police. These mostly involved people who died after concerns were raised with police about their welfare.

Deborah Coles, director of the Inquest charity, said, "Last year the world responded to the death of George Floyd and mobilised against deaths in police custody and racial injustice."

"Yet once again the data on deaths in police custody and contact in England and Wales repeat the same patterns—nothing changes."

"Successive governments are willing to accept these deaths."

"Which we know from our casework are often caused by systemic failures to safeguard intoxicated people or people in mental health crisis, dangerous restraint and neglect."

"The focus of this government however is denying structural racism



PICTURE: CARDIFF AND VALE BLM

PROTESTERS IN Cardiff demand justice for Mohamud Hassan in March after he died following police contact. (above) Police on patrol (left)

with clear vulnerabilities coming into contact with the police because their needs aren't adequately met by other services."

Since the end of the IOPC statistics reporting period on 31 March 2021, Inquest has recorded a further five deaths in or following police custody and contact.

On other pages...

Up in flames—ten years after the 2011 riots >> Pages 10&11

and inequality, appearing tough, ignoring evidence and repeating failed policies focused on criminalisation.

"Ultimately to prevent further deaths and harm, we must look beyond policing and redirect resources into community, health, welfare

and specialist services." The IOPC Director General, Michael Lockwood said substance abuse, intoxication and mental health vulnerabilities were "key issues".

He rightly added, "Yet again we are seeing a sadly familiar picture of people

Prisons suicide training incomplete

SOME 20 percent of suicide and self harm (Sash) retraining courses in English and Welsh prisons were never completed.

The prison service introduced Sash training following a spike in suicides in 2017.

All staff are expected to complete a refresher course every three years.

But figures obtained by the BBC showed that one in five refresher courses were never completed.

Despite an HMP Bedford action plan

stating, "Annual refresher training will be provided to staff," minimal training was done in 2017 and 2018, and barely any in 2019.

An analysis of coroners' reports into all prison suicides over the past five years found that seven out of ten mentioned staff training as an issue.

Staff are expected to complete suicide training

Tory legacy to blame for Scotland's drug deaths scandal

New research shows the drug death rate in Scotland is more than three times higher than the rest of Britain. Mark Brown says the roots of the problem go back decades

THE LATEST research into drug deaths in Scotland shows a horrifying 1,300 people died last year as a consequence of drug misuse.

Scotland's drugs death rate is more than three and a half times higher than the rest of Britain.

And this year marks the seventh consecutive year that Scotland has had the highest drug death rate in Europe.

The majority of people dying in Scotland's drugs crisis are said to have a so-called "polydrug" habit.

That means mixing opiates, such as heroin and methadone, with alcohol, prescription drugs and illegal copies of prescription medicines, such as "street Valium".

The research shows people living in Scotland's most deprived communities are 18 times more likely to die a drug-related death than people living in less deprived areas.

This includes places such as the East End of Glasgow, which is home to the two poorest electoral constituencies in Britain.

Much of the debate over the crisis has centred on the Scottish National Party government's failure to provide sufficient treatment and support services for drug users.

Admits

The first minister Nicola Sturgeon admits that the situation is a "national disgrace".

Last year she sacked public health minister Joe Fitzpatrick and appointed a new drugs minister, Angela Constance.

The Scottish Tories are trying to make political hay over the crisis, putting a Right to Recovery bill before the Scottish parliament. A

huge increase in drug treatment and support services is clearly needed.

But the catastrophic number of drug deaths in the country is rooted in decades of social neglect.

Dr John Budd of the Scottish Drugs Forum pointed to the destruction of vast swathes of Scottish heavy industry in the 1980s.

From shipbuilding to steel making, coal mining to car manufacturing, a huge number of Scottish industrial communities were plunged into mass unemployment.

Places such as Greenock, Clydebank, Linwood and Motherwell were turned into virtual ghost towns.

Rot

In Scotland's cities, most notably in Glasgow, hundreds of thousands of working class people were left to rot in peripheral housing schemes.

The housing was poor and amenities almost non-existent.

All of this was a direct and deliberate consequence of Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher's war against the trade unions throughout the 1980s.

Dr Budd is right to point to the 1980s as the historical basis of Scotland's drugs crisis.

He is also correct to call both for investment in drug services and a Portuguese-style policy of decriminalisation of drug use.

But, ultimately, the solution rests on the eradication of the deep poverty and social neglect that's driving so many people into drug addiction.



What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk



ON THE march in against council cuts in Glasgow last weekend

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

'These venues are ours'—hundreds march against council cuts in Glasgow

MORE THAN 300 trade unionists and campaigners marched and rallied in Glasgow on Saturday against council cuts.

Glasgow Life—a council-controlled arms-length organisation—wants to close almost half of its venues such as libraries, museums, and sports and community centres.

The SNP-led council claims that these venues have not been closed, but simply they have "not reopened."

It says this is because of a £38 million drop in income for Glasgow Life during the pandemic.

Earmarked

Yet many of the threatened venues were earmarked in 2019 for possible closure.

Campaigners have voiced concerns that Glasgow Life has used the pandemic as an excuse to make cuts.

There is also widespread anger that the SNP-led council is using "community empowerment" legislation to hand over its venues to vested interests.

Already, community assets have transferred to the charity wings of Rangers and Partick Thistle football clubs and the Scottish Golf Union.

The latter involved the sale of a large strip of land for £200,000—less than the cost of an average size house in the city.

At the rally, speaker after speaker told how the threatened venues enriched their lives.

They said they would fight up to and beyond next year's council elections to save them.

Laura, a Unison union rep in Glasgow Life said, "These venues are ours and we want to keep them."

Dr Elspeth King, former curator at the People's Palace museum, said Glasgow Life is

"literally sucking the life out of the museums and libraries, out of the sports facilities".

Jim Monaghan, from march organisers Glasgow Against Closures, said, "Libraries, museums, sports fields, swimming pools, they are not an extra, they are not a luxury."

Essential

"We can't afford not to have these things. They are an essential part of a council's service and an essential part of communities thriving."

"If they close these services, everything else that the council does gets more difficult."

"Without libraries, social work becomes more difficult, without swimming pools and sports centres, health becomes more difficult. Without museums and galleries, education becomes more difficult."

Jim Main



New rage on streets of Guatemala

THOUSANDS OF angry protesters took to the streets in Guatemala this week to call for the resignation of president Alejandro Giammattei.

Mobilisations raged across the country with roadblocks also being set up. Many protesters held placards saying, "Giammattei, resign."

The marches are the latest in a series of protests in Guatemala over unemployment and austerity. Demonstrators last November even set fire to the Congress building.

Protests gained momentum after attorney general Maria Porras sacked Juan Francisco Sandova as the head of the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity.

Sandova has been leading investigations into corruption committed by Giammattei.

Martin Toc, an indigenous leader from western Guatemala, said that he was protesting to say, "We do not recognise him (Giammattei) as president because he no longer represents the interests of our country."

More protests have been called including a national strike next Thursday.

Right move against Peru president

FORMER UNION leader Pedro Castillo was finally sworn in as president of Peru last Wednesday. But the right are already mobilising against him.

Castillo won the election with a very small margin against right wing candidate Keiko Fujimori. Supporters of Fujimori mounted angry protests the day before Castillo was sworn in—in some cases attacking ministers' cars.

After becoming president Castillo appointed Guido Bellido as the prime minister. Bellido is part of the Free Peru party which describes itself as socialist.

He has already been attacked for apparently having sympathies for the Maoist Shining Path guerilla group.

Bosses are trying to sabotage Castillo. Wealthy Peruvians have withdrawn billions of dollars of cash and investments. They caused Peru's currency the Sol to lose 12 percent of its value since it became clear Castillo would become president.

Workers and Castillo's supporters—prepared to use their own weapons of strikes and protests—will be essential to stop the sabotage of the right and the rich.

Delta variant outbreaks show new Covid danger

by SAM ORD

THE US's chief medical adviser has warned that "things will get worse" as coronavirus cases soar across the country.

There are more than 60,000 new cases a day in the US—the highest since April, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). More than 80 percent of those are infections of the Delta variant strain.

Infections reached a record high last Saturday—with 21,683 new cases reported. That's the highest one-day total reported in the state since the pandemic began.

And the following day, the state also broke its previous record hospitalisations—also set more than a year ago.

White House politicians and officials blame the increase on a slowing uptake of vaccines, particularly in areas with strong Republican support.

Anthony Fauci, the chief White House medical adviser, said, "We have 100 million people in this country who are eligible to be vaccinated who are not vaccinated."

"They are the ones that are propagating this outbreak."

Yet Fauci also ruled out the idea of more lockdowns to contain the virus's spread. Bosses in the US don't want the spread of the Delta variant to stop people from going to work.

Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank President Neel Kashkari fretted that the variant was "creating a bunch of caution" among workers.

Meanwhile, in Tokyo where the Olympic games are still in full swing, more than 4,000 cases were recorded last Saturday.

That's the highest ever recorded in the city.

A day before this record figure Japanese authorities extended the state of emergency across three prefectures, including Osaka in the west until 24 August.

Short

But this fails to offer real protection as the Paralympic games are only due to end on 5 September.

The increase in infections across Japan has triggered more discontent with the Olympics being held during an international pandemic.

Protesters in Japan called for the Games to be delayed further or scrapped entirely.

Meanwhile, in China, millions of people have been put under new lockdowns as the Delta variant spreads.

More than 300 cases have been reported in the last two weeks, and the Delta variant has been detected. Now all 1.5 million

residents of the city of Zhangjiajie have been placed under lockdown restrictions with all tourist attractions closing. The outbreak in that city was linked to travellers arriving in the Nanjing airport.

The spread of the Delta variant across the world raises the terrifying prospect of new mutations and variants developing, which could be resistant to current vaccines.

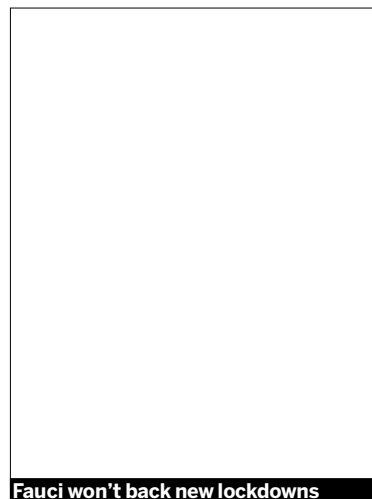
Despite Tory triumphalism in Britain, the pandemic is far from over.



On other pages...

Empty shelves—nothing super about the market >>Page 17

CASES HAVE soared in Tokyo amid the Olympic Games



Fauci won't back new lockdowns

MYANMAR

Senior general makes himself prime minister

THE HEAD of the military dictatorship in Myanmar this week declared himself prime minister of a "caretaker government".

The junta has been fighting a fierce battle against hundreds of thousands of democracy protesters since a coup in March this year.

The move comes amid growing pressure on the regime.

Protests on the streets of towns and cities are continuing but there has also been fierce fighting in the countryside.

Many activists from the cities retreated there as military repression increased.

Now democracy fighters have joined forces with a number of ethnic groups fighting for autonomy to launch waves of attacks on the Myanmar military.

The country is also in the grip of a major wave of Covid infections.

The economy is thought

Military ruler Min Aung Hlaing

to have contracted by almost 20 percent as a result of the instability. And that has regional partners, including China, extremely worried.

If the state were to collapse, it could spread that volatility across borders.

The military's declaration of a new government, and plans to hold elections in two years, is designed purely to reassure its neighbours.

But with protests and strikes continuing, it is unlikely to reassure anyone in Myanmar.

Olympics boost sexism

LAST WEEK we saw the Norwegian women's Olympic beach handball team get fined £1,300 for wearing "improper attire"—shorts instead of bikini bottoms.

The male athletes wear vest tops and shorts. But women must wear bikini bottoms "with a close fit and cut on an upward angle towards the top of the leg".

The Olympics—and sport more broadly—has a long history of sexism and the sexualisation of women's bodies.

Women were only allowed to participate in the Olympics for the first time in 1900. But only 2 percent of all athletes were women and they were forced to wear ankle length dresses with long sleeves and high necks.

This was so they didn't "distract" the male athletes.

In 2012 Boris Johnson listed "20 reasons to feel cheerful about the Olympics". One of his reasons was disgracefully the "semi-naked women playing beach volleyball".

Sexism in the Olympics is endemic, it infects each sport. From attributing women's success to their husbands or their male coaches, to not taking them seriously as athletes to sexually harassing and objectifying them.

It's clear that the Olympics are not exempt from systemic sexism. The games have only shone a light on the injustices women face in sport.

Molly Docherty
Manchester



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

'Small steps' won't help stop the climate crisis, action can

IF STRATEGIES from Allegra Stratton, the prime minister's spokesperson for the COP26 climate summit, are anything to go by then November's meeting will do nothing to arrest environmental crisis.

The "small steps" solution to stopping ecological destruction is a discredited approach within the environmental movement.

It does nothing to challenge the true causes of the problem.

In the face of wildfires, floods and storms, not rinsing dishes before using a dishwasher—if you have one—is simply not enough.

Studies have shown that the cause of climate change rests with a numerically small, but economically powerful section of the economy.

Just 100 companies are responsible for 71 percent of emissions. Most of these are fossil fuel corporations.

They, in the interest of profit, have obscured, undermined and confused debate and action on climate change. It is their behaviour that must be curtailed.

Freezing half a loaf of bread as Stratton suggests won't do this.

I own a bamboo toothbrush. But this substitute isn't going to save the world—even if everyone else bought one.

One of the corporate sponsors of the Glasgow COP is SSE, an energy company that runs the Peterhead power station.

According to Friends of the Earth, SSE is "Scotland's single biggest polluter in 2019" because

of the 1.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted at Peterhead in that year.

In the face of pollution on this scale, my bamboo toothbrush is worthless.

Dealing with the climate crisis means challenging the irrational and irresponsible quest for profit from fossil fuels. That is the sort of environmental politics we need, not a green-washing blame game aimed at ordinary individuals.

This is why we need to make sure that there is a massive presence on the streets during COP26 and afterwards. We must demand radical action on climate change and an end to fossil fuel capitalism.

Martin Empson
Manchester

Lewontin obituary gets his ideas all wrong

IN JOHN Parrington's obituary of Richard Lewontin, he writes that Lewontin enriched the ideas of Marx "with new ideas based on novel insights into how DNA functions as a 'blueprint'".

Parrington also wrote that Lewontin argued that society evolves "...in a way that has to some extent superseded biology".

But Lewontin did not hold this view.

He insisted life is the result of a complex interaction of genes, environment and the organism itself—a triple

helix, the title of his book.

Parrington also writes, "A person's possibility of realising their potential is far more affected by their position in class society than it is by their genetic make-up."

But again Lewontin didn't hold this view. He belittled it by labelling it "the empty bucket" metaphor.

There is much to learn from Lewontin's ideas and studies but Parrington's article is not at all clear on what this is.

Terry Sullivan
North London

Simone Biles—mental health matters

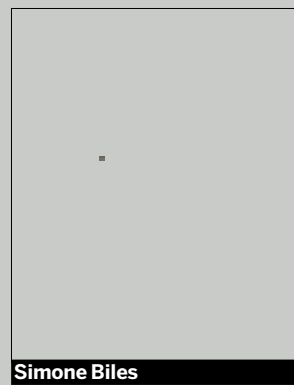
SIMONE BILES, probably the greatest gymnast of all time, withdrew from the US Olympic team during the Tokyo Games.

She spoke about the importance of preserving her mental health and the need to "protect our minds and our bodies" adding, "We are people, at the end of the day."

Biles' decision drew praise from many supporters and fans.

But there were others who shamefully accused her of using mental health as an excuse for a below-standard performance.

This inspired a whole



Simone Biles

number of gymnasts who spoke out in support of her courage, to stand up against the pressures to shut up and push themselves beyond what is

mentally healthy.

Her withdrawal highlights how gymnastics and all professional sports are driven by companies who have no interest whatsoever in athletes' wellbeing.

They create a toxic culture of bullying to win.

Simone admits that she has lost confidence in her abilities, lost self esteem and others have said they had felt suicidal.

These are classic symptoms of depression and it is clear that in the drive for gold, she has finished second to profit.

Dave Wyatt
Wolverhampton

Just a thought...

Sport and alienation

SIMONE Biles' departure from the Olympics shows how a system of exploitation causes mental distress.

Sport offers escapism for millions as it binds them to a certain community and helps to promote competition instead of unity.

But pressures placed on athletes by fans and national leaders alienates them from the love of the sport.

Nathan Johnston
Newcastle

Student solidarity

A VIBRANT UCU union march and rally took place in Chester last Saturday against planned redundancies by the University of Chester.

Strikers from UCU Liverpool and students joined the 150-strong protest.

Students and staff must continue to unite as the fight continues to oppose compulsory redundancies planned by management.

Laila Hassan
Bolton

Vaccine passports

SOCIALIST Worker is right to say vaccine passports "will disproportionately affect black and Asian people".

Due to the government's incompetence the vaccine rollout programme hasn't worked as effectively in poorer, diverse communities.

If people choose not to get vaccinated that outlines the rollout's failures.

Passports will give the government a scapegoat to transfer their failures onto.

Hannah Lloyd
North Wales

GMB failed workers

BRITISH GAS workers have been let down by GMB, not surprising for a union that backed Lisa Nandy as Labour leader.

Muca
On Twitter

BRITISH GAS workers should pull out of the GMB and join a proper union like the IWGB or the UVW.

Chris Smith
On Twitter

AUSTERITY and police racism is an explosive mix. Ten years ago, the police killing of an unarmed black man—Mark Duggan—triggered the largest eruption of anger in 30 years

Between 6 and 11 August 2011, riots exploded in London and spread to places such as Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham.

On Saturday 6 August, around 200 of Mark's family and friends marched from Broadwater Farm estate, north London, to Tottenham police station. They wanted answers about Mark's death and were promised that a senior police officer would address them.

The senior officer never came. Instead, cops "set upon" a teenage girl.

Socialist Worker reported at the time, "Within hours, anger at the police exploded. Police cars and several shops and a bus were in flames.

"Many hundreds of people took to the streets. They reflected the local population—all ages, black and white, Asian, as well as many Hassidic Jews."

Throughout the night there was a standoff as riot police gathered across Tottenham High Road to stop people joining. Looting also took place on the high street and a retail park.

Rioters threw bricks at police vans that drove through the crowds.

The next day in Brixton, south London, young people fought with police who used batons and dogs against them. People also confronted the cops in other parts of London including Enfield, Chingford Mount, Dalston and Islington.

By Monday all of London's boroughs were on riot alert. In Hackney, cops retreated from rocks and bottles as bins and cars were burned and turned into barricades. By Thursday an extra 10,000 police were brought in, reaching a total of to 16,000 to reduce the rioting in London.

Atmosphere

But from the Monday, rioting spread. One witness from inside the Bullring shopping centre in Birmingham says it was the police who caused the rioting.

"There were more police there than I've ever seen," they said. "They created an atmosphere of trouble and tension.

"I watched police stopping and searching black and Asian young people. At about 5.30pm police arrested a young black man who had done nothing wrong.

"We were pushed out into the street. The police kettled a group of young people who started to get angry because they hadn't done anything wrong."

On the same day in Liverpool hundreds took to the streets, and in Leeds rioters also fought with police.

Over 200 people fought with police in Bristol. Rioters smashed the windows of a new Tesco store and a police station and cars were also set on fire in Nottingham.

On Tuesday 9 August in Manchester most of the rioters were school students and teenagers, and numbers grew from 600 up to 2,000. Rioters hit the city centre



IN TOTTENHAM, north London, young people refused to be intimidated by police in full riot gear (top) Sainsburys supermarket in nearby Enfield was raided (left)

to 24 year olds had risen from 15 percent in 2008 to 20 percent in 2010. Among young black people, the rate of unemployment was 35 percent.

Ben, a young black man from Dalston in east London, told Socialist Worker at the time, "I'm sick of being told I'm the problem. It's black youth this and black youth that.

"I cheered the riots because I thought finally people are saying they've had enough."

Collectivity

The Tories wanted to blame poor people for expressing their fury. Prime minister David Cameron painted rioters as "mindless" to play down the anger and events that sparked the riots.

Rioters were criticised for looting shops and attacking local businesses in the "community". But the anger had some direction.

A 17-year old man from west London said, "During the riots it felt like all the people who had said 'nothing will ever change' came out. There was collectivity and cooperation.

"When people realised they could loot the shops it was basic commodities that went first. People came out of shops with nappies and rice."

The destruction of property was an expression of anger at symbols others' growing wealth. One of the first buildings to be set on fire on Tottenham High Road belonged to a police solicitor.

Other businesses were targeted that represented an unequal society such as bookmakers and supermarkets.

The Tories followed the riots with repression and punishment (see right). But they also, for a while, put policing and stop and search under scrutiny.

Now—ten years after the riots—the Tories are once more talking about giving cops more powers to use stop and search. And, as with the Tory and Labour governments that came before, they'll say it's to stamp out "violent crime."

Then, as now, they wanted to blame young people for rioting. But the people to blame are the Tories themselves—and the racist, unequal system they champion.



UP IN FLAMES

On the ten-year anniversary of the 2011 riots, Isabel Ringrose tells the story of how racism and austerity sparked an explosion of anger.

Main photographs by Guy Smallman



How the cops executed Mark Duggan in Tottenham

POLICE SHOT Mark Duggan in Tottenham, north London, on 4 August 2011. Following his killing, police released statements saying that Mark had shot at police first.

This turned out to be untrue.

In 2014 a public inquest concluded Mark's death was a lawful killing—and subsequent appeals were rejected. Throughout the investigation, the Met and its IPCC watchdog gave contradictory accounts.

Mark had been in a minicab, which the police stopped. Earlier that day, the cab had driven to an address in east London, where Mark was given a shoebox.

Police claim that this shoebox contained a handgun. Mark's DNA wasn't found on the gun.

The officer who shot Mark, known as V53, claimed that he shot him on the "honest belief" he saw a gun in his hand, aimed at them.

Yet no independent witnesses reported seeing a gun. One witness said Mark was holding a phone.

A gun was found four metres away from where Mark was shot. But it was agreed at the inquest that it was not possible for him to have thrown the gun there, or that he had a gun in his hand.

V53 shot Mark through his bicep first and then the chest. He claimed after the first shot Mark tossed the gun.

Mark could only have done this before being shot through the arm, meaning he would've been unarmed when V53 shot him.

The inquiry heard that officer R31 informed officer V59 that a gun was found near the scene.

V59 directed response officers who arrived.

Shoebox

But when V59 did this, it was 34 seconds before officer Z51, who officially located the gun, reported its location.

Footage also shows officer Q63 ducking by the door of the cab. He is out of view for 12 seconds near where the shoebox was found.

He emerges and talks to V59 and R31, who also disappears to go to the grassed area. Then the armed response officers arrive to be instructed by V59.

The IPCC watchdog—now IOPC—said there was "nothing suspicious" that both R31 and Z51 found the gun.

It claimed V59 was "confused" when he said he knew where the gun was before Z51 "found" it.

State twisted legal system

LAWYER BRIAN Richardson represented some of those accused of involvement in the riots. He told Socialist Worker how the state turned the courts and sentencing into a propaganda machine for the state.

"So many people were arrested they had magistrates courts sitting into the night. You could regularly find yourself representing, five, six, or seven people in one session.

Many were charged with public order offences, such as violent disorder which carries a significant prison sentence. Others were charged with burglary.

Typically, when you go to court, you're told what your client has been charged with and you then advise them about what is going to happen and about the strength and weaknesses of the prosecution case in order to assist them in deciding how they should plead.

I had a client who was charged with burglary.

It was alleged that people had raided an Argos store and stripped the warehouse clean. My client found at the scene with a television. She admitted the offence and decided to plead guilty.

That is a sensible decision. If you plead guilty at the earliest opportunity you get the maximum reduction in the sentence, typically a third off when compared to if you were found guilty after a trial.

She was just 19 years old and had never been in trouble with the police before, so she should have been granted bail.

She should then have been sentenced in the magistrate's court a few weeks later after being interviewed by a probation officer.

That's what you would have expected. But what actually happened was that she was refused bail and remanded in custody. The judge indicated that the case would be sent to the crown court for sentencing.

That's important because crown courts have greater sentencing powers. For one single offence, the maximum sentence a magistrates court can give is six months.

So, if the magistrate's court had been sentencing, the maximum sentence would probably have been reduced to four months because of her guilty plea.

As someone with a clean record she would almost certainly have avoided prison, and would instead have been made to do something like unpaid work.

But at the crown court she was given a 13-month sentence.

That's one individual case. But it was clear that a policy decision had been made that nobody charged in relation to the riots was going to be given bail.

One day in court I was dealing with six cases. Every single one of my clients and every other defendant who was charged on that day was refused bail.

And, everyone who had pleaded guilty was sent to the crown court for sentencing. A very clear policy decision was taken to impose what were called "exemplary sentences". That bar was set by Judge Gilbert QC at Manchester crown court.

A number of people appealed to the court of appeal on the grounds that their sentences were "manifestly excessive". Almost all of the original sentences were upheld and that judgment set a benchmark for the many others which followed over the next couple of years."



Lawyer Brian Richardson represented many people who were charged during the riots. He says the system was rigged against them

Picture: Jo Holland

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

PROTESTERS IN Havana

Cuba—imperialism and mass protests

BIRMINGHAM
Wed 11 Aug, 7pm
281-634-5938

HARLOW
Thu 12 Aug,
7.30pm
832-8746-7480

LONDON: HACKNEY
Thu 12 Aug, 7.30pm
854-8245-8715

SWANSEA & WEST WALES
Thu 12 Aug, 7pm
902-964-963

GLASGOW
Thu 12 Aug, 7pm
879-2402-3259

HOME COUNTIES
Thu 12 Aug, 6.30pm
858 2051 4152

NORWICH
Wed 11 Aug, 7.30pm
906-652-5299

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

20 years after Genoa—anti-capitalism and the state

Wed 11 Aug,
7.30pm
914-9548-1031

BRADFORD

Voice of the unheard? 10 years since the 2011 riots

Thu 12 Aug,
7.30pm
885-9187-7552

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Marxism and art

Thu 12 Aug, 6.30pm

874-3262-3749

BRISTOL

The point is to change it—Marxism and history

Thu 12 Aug,
7.30pm
688-397-3148

BURNLEY & PENDLE

Will the economy bounce back after Covid?

Wed 11 Aug,
6.30pm
446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE

Cinema to video games—does capitalism destroy creativity?

Thu 12 Aug,
7.30pm
681-800-4408

CARDIFF

Is anarchism more radical than Marxism?

Wed 11 Aug,
7.30pm
630-181-4857

CHESTERFIELD

When workers fight for our environment

Thu 12 Aug,
7pm
828-532-8731

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

Is there a new Pink Tide in Latin America?

Wed 11 Aug,
7.30pm
894-2628-7708

EAST MIDLANDS

The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Wed 11 Aug, 7pm
354-874-4790

EDINBURGH

Sexism and the system

Wed 11 Aug, 7.30pm
431-459-112

HUDDERSFIELD

The Nakba—how Israel was created

Wed 11 Aug, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT

Covid, capitalism and disability

Thu 12 Aug,
8.15pm
434-623-8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Police, racism and the state

Thu 12 Aug, 7pm
992-204-9372

LEEDS

Is there a new Pink Tide in Latin America?

Thu 12 Aug, 7pm
881-4770-0676

LONDON: HARINGEY

The US and China—imperialism and the shifting balance of power

Wed 11 Aug,
7.30pm
459-388-1576

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Booklaunch: Rebellious Daughters of History

Thu 12 Aug, 7pm

874-012-7970

LONDON: NEWHAM

Soundtrack to the struggle—music and resistance

Wed 11 Aug, 7pm
288-098-8827

LONDON: SOUTH

Is human nature a barrier to socialism?

Wed 11 Aug,
7pm
497-196-1801

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Is Labour right to wave the Union Jack?

Wed 11 Aug,
7.30pm
818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

What is Zionism?

Wed 11 Aug, 7.30pm
543-023-057

LONDON: WEST

Booklaunch: Rebellious Daughters of History

Thu 12 Aug,
7.30pm
816-2991-5859

MANCHESTER

20 years after Genoa—anti-capitalism and the state

Wed 11 Aug, 7.15pm
323-178-7151

OXFORD & THAMES VALLEY

Voice of the unheard? 10 years since the 2011 riots

Wed 11 Aug, 7pm
861-2001-6477

PORTSMOUTH

How the Haitian Revolution defeated slavery

Wed 11 Aug, 7.30pm
488-934-2809

SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

100 years since Partition—can there be a united Ireland?

Thu 12 Aug, 7pm
528-174-9278

WIGAN

Modi, nationalism and resistance

Thu 12 Aug, 7pm
872-5136-9540

YORK & SCARBOROUGH

Is Britain becoming a police state?

Wed 11 Aug, 7.30pm
827-489-7492

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



The Labour Party—a Marxist History
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein and Charlie



Breaking Up the British State—Scotland, Independence and Socialism, £12



Does privilege explain racism? by Esme Choonara, Ken Olende, Yuri Prasad and Weyman Bennett, £3



Transgender Resistance
by Laura Miles
£10

PHONE 020 7637 1848 WEB bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600
Email enquiries@swp.org.uk
Post PO Box 74955
London E16 9EJ

Medicine for the soul—the Edinburgh Festival returns

Physically-distanced theatre is now permitted in Scotland. Critic **Mark Brown** offers highlights from this year's Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe

IN 2020, because of the pandemic, the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) and Edinburgh Festival Fringe were cancelled, for the first time in their 73-year history.

Now the festivals are returning with a combination of—physically distanced—in-person productions and online shows.

The following guide to this year's theatre programmes concentrates exclusively on work that can be experienced live and in person.

Irish writer Enda Walsh, author of the fabulous dark comedy *The Walworth Farce*, has a new play, titled *Medicine* (Traverse Theatre, Aug 4-29), being staged as part of the EIF programme.

It's a bleakly comic drama about society's treatment of mental health. The play follows protagonist John Kane's experience in hospital, where he meets "a giant lobster, two women called Mary, a very old man and a jazz percussionist."

Absurdist

Medicine seems set to reconfirm Walsh's reputation for writing plays in a similar vein to the work of the great absurdist dramatist Eugene Ionesco.

In the Fringe programme, the long-awaited *Doppler* (Newhailes House and Gardens, Aug 6-23), by Grid Iron theatre company, is likely to be a highlight.

Cancelled last year, due to Covid, this outdoor play is based on the novel of the same name by Norwegian writer Erlend Loe.

Grid Iron director Ben Harrison's adaptation centres on the title character, played by excellent, Scottish actor Keith Fleming. Following a



MAMORU IRIGUCHI'S SEX EDUCATION XPLORERS (S.E.X.)

PICTURE: NIAL WALKER

bike accident, he decides to leave his seemingly perfect, middle-class life and live in a tent in the forest.

With a viral pandemic and climate chaos as its backdrop, this may well be the most politically pertinent show at this year's festival.

The gloriously original Mamoru Iriguchi promises to be both informative (for teenagers, and many older theatregoers) and hilarious with *Sex Education Xplorers* (S.E.X.) (Summerhall, Aug 6-29).

The piece is being promoted as "a time-travel ride through the evolution of sexes." It "celebrates our diverse

gender identities and sexualities."

In his previous outstanding show *Eaten*, Iriguchi emerged from a lion as Dr Poo to teach young children about the wonders of the food chain. So I can't think of anyone better to offer a progressive, humanistic and brilliantly unique education about sex, gender and sexuality.

Also on the Fringe programme, I'm looking forward to *Swallow the Sea* Caravan Theatre (Summerhall, Aug 6-28).

It promises to be a highly accomplished and imaginative work of puppet and object theatre.

Later in August, the EIF programme presents *Lament for Sheku Bayoh* (Lyceum Theatre, Aug 25-28). This is Black Scottish writer Hannah Lavery's elegy to the Scots-African man who died in police custody in 2015.

The number of live, in-person shows is, of course, much smaller than in festivals past.

The audiences are smaller too as, unlike under Boris Johnson's dangerous free-for-all in England, Scottish theatres still have to practice physical distancing.

So, get booking, before all of the shows sell out.

Heroism and horror—true story of Auschwitz escape

FILM

THE AUSCHWITZ ESCAPE

Available on Amazon Prime Video from Friday 6 August

SLOVAKIA'S Oscar submission for best international film tells the true story of two Auschwitz prisoners who escaped hell.

Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler provided a rare, first-hand and shocking report of genocide at the camp.

After meticulous planning and with the

help and resilience of their fellow prisoners, they manage to escape.

The inmates they had left behind courageously stand their ground against the Nazi camp officers.

Meanwhile the two men are driven to survive by the hope that their evidence could save lives.

Emaciated and hurt, they make their way through the mountains back to Slovakia to share their horrific report to the United States Red Cross.

Harrowing at every



Escapees Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler

turn, *The Auschwitz Escape* is all about telling the horror and the truth of the Holocaust.

That means director Peter Bebjack has to show the terrifying brutality of the regime in the camp—which he manages to do clearly but sensitively.

Bebjack's focus, though is on the heroism of the two escapees—and of those who stayed behind and risked their lives to help them.

Still, inevitably, it is a very difficult watch.

Hannah Smith

RADIO

BLACK MUSIC IN EUROPE—A HIDDEN HISTORY

Starts Wednesday 9 August, 9am, Radio4, and then on BBC Sounds

THIS IS the fourth and final series of Clarke Peters' stories from the history of black music in Europe over the last four decades.

The first episode in this series looks at the years 1989-2006.

From the collapse of the Eastern Bloc to the rise of multiculturalism,



Clark Peters

this was a time that saw old walls come tumbling down, while new forms of technology and new styles of music were all emerging at a rapid pace.

Clarke looks at the music of black Europe in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

We hear from Jeff Mills and Dimitri Hegemann on Detroit techno in Berlin, and electronic pioneers Shut Up and Dance on the rave era in London. Rita Maia and DJ Marfox talk about the Batida scene in Lisbon.

All nine episodes from the first three series are available on the BBC Sounds website and app.

TOP 5 BOOKS

- Breaking Up the British State**
Fotheringham, Sherry, Bryce (eds)
- 32 Counties: the Failure of Partition and the Case for a United Ireland**
Kieran Allen
- Transgender Resistance**
Laura Miles
- Rebellious Daughters of History**
Judy Cox
- A Rebel's Guide to George Orwell**
John Newsinger

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

THE last remaining democratic gains of the Arab Spring are under threat, ten years later, in the country where it all began.

With the protection of the army and the police, Tunisia's president Kais Saïed launched a coup last week.

He sacked the prime minister and several top officials, froze parliament, and handed himself a raft of new powers. Perhaps most tellingly of all, he immediately banned all public gatherings of more than three people and imposed night time curfews until the end of August.

The coup is apparently backed by the regimes in Egypt and the UAE—two forces of counter-revolution.

And yet the coup has been successful partly because it tapped the anger of people who made the revolution in 2010. A decade later, many of them now feel betrayed—as Tunisian socialist Jawhar Tounsi explains.

“People don't feel that parliamentary democracy is delivering anything,” he told Socialist Worker. “There's been a long-running political crisis. The government was failing economically and the Covid situation has been very bad. “The parliament is very unpopular and the government is probably at its least popular.”

Saïed's coup came after a day of anti-government protests. They were apparently called by a new group called the July 25 Movement.

THIS GROUP'S demands—such as the dissolution of parliament, more presidential powers and an investigation into parties that received “illegal” funding—chimed with Saïed's coup.

But in reports from the demonstrations, many protesters had their own demands—unemployment, poverty and police brutality. These had already fuelled a series of protests earlier this year.

Protests in 2010 began among the poor and unemployed in smaller cities and towns, where the rate of joblessness was even higher than the national average of 13 percent.

They soon became a revolt against the regime of dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

His free market reforms had impoverished ordinary people, while his police force hit them brutally.

As the revolution spread, it was joined by other sections of Tunisian society, including some of the better-off whose main demands were democratic reforms.

SUPPORTERS OF Tunisian President Kais Saïed rally in front of the parliament in Tunis

TUNISIA INTURMOIL

Ten years since the revolution Tunisia is facing a coup.

Nick Clark explains how corruption, Covid and parliamentary betrayals have fed support for a new government



President of Tunisia, Kais Saïed

After the revolution overthrew Ben Ali, parts of the movement wanted to end the process with the setting up of a new parliamentary regime.

The revolution stalled without taking on the wider system responsible for poverty in the first place.

The Islamist party Ennahda, banned under Ben Ali, led a new government. But it was faced with an economic crisis and caught between the

“

The revolution stalled without taking on the system to blame for poverty

demands of the rich and poor. Ennahda has been part of every government since Ben Ali's fall. But the parliamentary regime has been plagued by economic crises, shaky governments, punishing austerity, and outbursts of resistance.

Investors attracted by the poor workers' rights that existed under Ben Ali's regime began to pull their money out after his fall.

So Tunisia's governments

have taken three “bailout” loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in ten years. Before the coup, the Ennahda-led government was trying to negotiate a fourth.

Each loan came with strings attached—demands by the IMF that the government “restructure” its economy to benefit private big business.

In other words, at the demand of the IMF, Tunisia's governments pushed through more of the neoliberal policies that helped to make life miserable under Ben Ali.

Corruption spread and unemployment is now closer to 18-36 percent among young people. It was all propped up by a police force using violent repression against protests and strikes.

Meanwhile, Tunisia's economy plunged deeper into crisis—with growing debt on one hand and Covid-battered tourism and manufacturing industries on the other.

To cap it all off, Tunisia has a worse Covid death rate per 100 people than any other country in Africa. Some 18,000 Tunisians have died of Covid.

It has relied on vaccine donations from other countries and has struggled to roll them out efficiently. Just 8 percent of its population are fully vaccinated.

And its health service is breaking. The Tunisian health minister warned in early July “the boat is sinking” as hospitals ran out of beds and oxygen.

All of this led to last week's coup.

The new regime has been in a long-running crisis, to the point where it could no longer govern.

This crisis played out in a split between Saïed, the prime minister Hichem Mechici, and the speaker of parliament, Ennahda leader Rached Ghannouchi.

Under a constitution adopted in 2014, state powers are supposed to be split between the parliament and the president.

But Saïed openly wants more power concentrated in the president's hands.

In April he insisted, as commander of the army, he should also be in charge of the police and internal security services. That came after he refused to approve a new interior minister—responsible for the police.

Saïed coupled this with attacks on the government over its handling of the pandemic. Just days before the coup, he declared that the military would take charge of the health crisis.

He won popular support for all this by dressing it up as a challenge to Tunisia's failed parliamentary system.

Saïed was elected president in 2019 as an independent, without the backing of any political machine. Instead, using his reputation as a professor of constitutional law, he presented his planned reforms as a way of culling corruption and fixing the system.

Jawhar says this had traction among ordinary people still angry at the betrayals of the government long after the revolutionary process ended.

“Up to the coup Saïed benefited from relative popularity despite the fact, he hasn't done anything meaningful for the people. The main thing about him is he is described as someone who is not corrupt.”

“The anger against the regime and the hopes for social justice have been diverted,” he added. “It's been converted into an anger mainly against the Islamist party, and also the incapacity of parliament to achieve anything for the Tunisians.”

Less forgivably, much of the left in Tunisia—as well as the leadership of the large, hugely powerful UGTT trade union—have also fallen in behind Saïed.

After the revolution, most of the organised left put their hopes for change in parliamentary alliances with what they saw as progressive liberals and nationalists against Ennahda.

That failed. Despite large protests against the Ennahda government in 2013, the left's Popular Front alliance did miserably in elections.

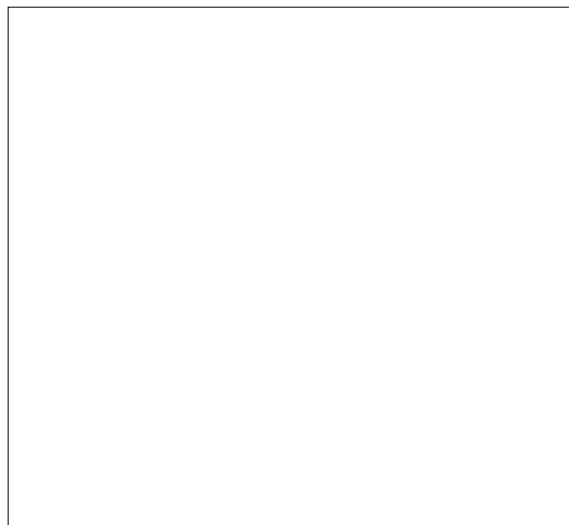
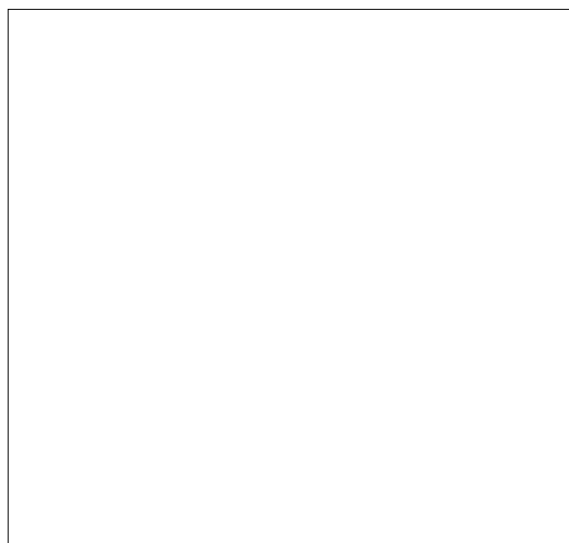
Now many — though not all — of the organisations involved in the Popular Front back Saïed against Ennahda instead.

For its part, the UGTT leadership hopes, under Saïed, they'll have more influence at the top of the government and the state.

Yet Saïed has his agenda—to rescue the state and end the crisis for Tunisia's ruling class.

His method for doing that is overturning a democratically elected government and strengthening the army and police in its place.

“Saïed gained the support of the ruling class through the coup,” said Jawhar. “The political class is in crisis and he's offering them a way out. The president is ending a political fight between him and Ennahda with the support of the army.



The revolution in Tunisia inspired thousands to take the streets (top) Anti-government protester earlier this year (above)

PICTURE TOP: TAREK MRAD/FLICKR

The anti-democratic forces are very happy. They think that maybe this is an opportunity to solve the crisis of the ruling class and punish the Islamists by taking away democracy.”

That's why Jawhar says it's a big mistake for the left to go along with the coup, hoping for a return to some new form of democracy. In reality, it's likely to lead to further attacks on the left and ordinary people.

“Saïed is going to continue the same neoliberal policy,” said Jawhar. “The left think they can get close to the people by supporting the coup. But this is exactly the sort of situation where right wing ideas get traction.

“If you accept stopping democracy now, for the purpose of protecting the state, why wouldn't Saïed continue stopping democracy?”

“The forces are clear, they support the coup because they're against democracy—they will gain traction.”it gradually strengthen its influence.

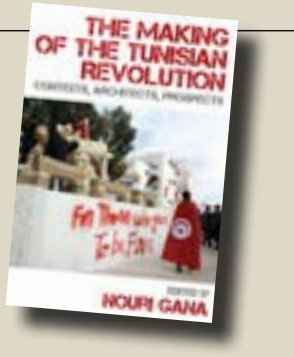
READ MORE

● **Tunisia in revolt—ten years on**
Socialist Worker article
bit.ly/tunis0721

● **Tunisia—the people's revolution**
by Chamseddine Mnasri
International Socialism journal
bit.ly/3xijsj7/

● **The Making of the Tunisian Revolution**
by Nouri Gana
£19

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



COMMENT

Damning reports reveal child abuse the state ignored

Separate inquiries into child sexual abuse at two councils are shocking accounts of how poor children are cast aside by the system, writes Simon Basketter

“THEY treated children in care as if they were worthless.”

This is the damning verdict of a report about the abuse of children in south London in Lambeth Council's care by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

More than 700 children suffered years of sexual, physical and racist abuse since the 1960s, says the report.

At least 48 deaths were connected to the abuse.

The inquiry investigated abuse in a range of institutions.

It has a chequered history of getting to the bottom of abuse scandals, particularly those involving the higher reaches of the state. This meant some survivors of the Lambeth scandal were reluctant to give evidence.

But it is clearly not “spaffing up a wall” as Boris Johnson so charmingly claimed.

The report said, “This complete disbelief of children was incomprehensible. Even when their allegations proved to be substantiated, they were shown no compassion and given no support.”

Some were taken into care because they experienced—or were at risk of—abuse or neglect.

Some were in care simply because they were from families whose problems were poverty.

The council “put vulnerable children in the path” of sex offenders, with “devastating, life-long consequences for their victims”.

Only one member of senior staff was ever disciplined. These are not just problems of the past. Children across Bradford, for instance, are being abused and are unprotected, according to another new damning report.

A review into five cases in

LAMBETH COUNCIL is slammed in a report

Bradford following instances of abuse of children in council care found they had been “raped, sexually assaulted, physically assaulted and forced to take drugs and alcohol”.

Four of the five “experienced being arrested, spending time in custody and in some cases convicted of offences”.

Services

Predictably the Daily Mail newspaper decided the Lambeth scandal was all about the left wing Labour council in the 1980s.

The report did say that the council sought to “take on the government” to the detriment of services in the 1980s.

The report added, “During that time, children in care became pawns in a toxic power game within Lambeth Council and between the council and central government.”

While this doesn't recognise who held the most power, it is true that the children held the least.

The horrific abuse covered in the report went on for over four decades. So for the Mail

“

Some were in care simply because they were from poor families

to say it is down to the left wing council rate capping campaign is at best obtuse.

And despite the Lambeth victims being disproportionately black, the quest to blame “political correctness” goes on.

The Sun and others claimed official fear of being called racist in Bradford facilitated abuse. This isn't in the report—which is critical of the police and social services—at all.

It doesn't detract from the horror of the case to note that a Home Office report last year showed most of those who commit child sexual exploitation offences in groups are white men.

Just as noting that most abuse takes place within the family doesn't diminish the horrors meted out in state institutions.

Survivors of abuse struggle to get support, never mind justice. But then the Tories have cut by a quarter the funding for child protection services in the last ten years.

Attitudes that treat working class young people as worthless and women as objects don't come from one ethnic group. They come from the top of the system.

The press that salaciously whips up racism over abuse reinforces those ideas.

There will be more handwringing and scapegoating as the inquiry publishes its full report next year.

What there won't be is an attempt to tackle a system that institutionalises and covers up the abuses it creates.

Climate crisis could be past ‘tipping point’

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

THE EARTH’S “vital signs” are getting worse because of an “unrelenting business as usual”. That’s the finding of a new climate report—backed by over 10,000 scientists—published last Wednesday.

The report in the BioScience journal examined “vital signs”, key markers of the planet’s health such as greenhouse gas emissions, glacier thickness and deforestation.

It found that 18 out of 31 “vital signs” had reached record highs and lows this year.

And in fact, 13 broke records.

Warns

Professor William Ripple, a lead author, warned, “There is growing evidence we are getting close to or have already gone beyond tipping points.”

These tipping points “associated with important parts of the Earth system” include “warm-water coral reefs, the Amazon rainforest and the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets”.

Deforestation is at an all

GLACIERS ARE losing 31 percent more ice and snow than 15 years ago

time high, with 1.11 million hectares destroyed in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest between 2019 and 2020.

Glaciers are losing 31 percent more ice and snow than 15 years ago. And while fossil fuel consumption fell during the pandemic in 2020, it is very likely to rise

once again this year. Carbon dioxide concentration levels reached their highest ever monthly average in April.

The report comments, “A major lesson from Covid-19 is that even colossally decreased transportation and consumption are not nearly enough.

“Instead, transformational system changes are required.”

It points to world leaders’ promises to “build back better” and redirect Covid-19 recovery funds into green policies.

But it found that only 17 percent of these funds have actually been put into environmental policies as of

March this year. In the face of “intensifying urgency and insufficient efforts”, the report calls for action on six steps.

These include a complete move away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.

It says, “The phaseout of fossil fuels should be similarly comprehensive and

it must ultimately prohibit fossil fuel-related exploration, production and infrastructure development.”

As well as calling for cutting back on fossil fuels, the report wants moves to restore biodiversity and move away from “overconsumption by the wealthy”.

Yet it also buys into the false idea that overpopulation is fuelling climate chaos, with calls for “stabilising and gradually reducing the population”.

System

The problem isn’t too many people—it’s too many rich people and their system that puts the pursuit of profit before people and planet.

The report ends by saying action must be taken now. “We must join together as a global community with a shared sense of urgency, cooperation, and equity,” it says. Only action by ordinary people will force urgent action over climate change.

Climate protests outside the Cop26 talks in Glasgow in November are an opportunity to rage at the world leaders, whose inaction is leading us closer to catastrophe.

JOIN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

☐ Yes, I'd like to be a member

☐ I'd like more information and to receive emails

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Return to SWP membership department,
PO Box 74955 London E16 9EJ.

Or scan this QR code on your phone

Phone 020 7840 5602

Email membership@swp.org.uk



Subscribe to Socialist Worker

Have Socialist Worker delivered with your post every week for a direct debit of £5 a month

I want to subscribe to Socialist Worker with a monthly direct debit of £5

Name

Address.....

Postcode

E-mail

Phone

I would like ____ extra papers to sell
(this will not be deducted from my bank account)

For official use only—this is not part of the instructions to your bank/building society

Sherborne Publications,
PO Box 74955 London E16 9EJ

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by direct debit

Originator identification no. 973355

Our reference no.
.....

1. Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To the manager:

Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

2. Name(s) of account holder(s)
.....

3. Branch sort code / /

4. Bank/building society account no.
.....

5. Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay Sherborne Publications direct debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the direct debit guarantee.

I understand that this instruction may remain with Sherborne Publications and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank or building society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of account

Direct Debit

Direct debit guarantee

■ This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.

■ If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Sherborne Publications will notify you ten working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Sherborne Publications to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.

■ If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Sherborne Publications or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.

■ If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Sherborne Publications asks you to.

■ You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Socialist Worker Subscriptions

Post PO Box 74955 London E16 9EJ

Phone 020 7840 5601

Web www.socialistworker.co.uk

Empty shelves—nothing super about the market

With shelves staying bare and shortages predicted to get worse, **Sophie Squire** looks at what’s behind the crisis and pins the blame on production for profit

FOR the second time during the pandemic, a trip down to the supermarket could leave you frustrated, unable to buy many of the basics.

Behind your frustration lie “just in time” methods of production and distribution, designed to maximise the bosses’ profits.

Under this system, firms don’t hold big stocks and only take deliveries of things they immediately need. Supermarket bosses, for example, only fill their shops with what they expect to sell right away.

This means that even a relatively small spike in demand can leave supermarkets unable to restock their shelves quickly enough. It’s what happened at the beginning of the pandemic as the Tories brought in lockdown measures for the first time.

And similarly, even a relatively small decline in supply can cause chaos.

So it’s little wonder that a shortage of 100,000 heavy good vehicle (HGV) drivers—who are an essential part of supply chains across Britain—has caused a nasty shock.

Things are so bad, Tesco announced this week it would offer a £1,000 bonus to drivers.

Coronavirus and a right wing version of Brexit—both made worse by the Tory government—have helped the shortage.

A rise in Covid cases is forcing workers in all sectors to self-isolate, including many lorry drivers. The government’s solution is to allow 10,000 food haulage drivers to forgo self-isolation and work if they’ve had two doses of the vaccine.

And logistics bosses say the pandemic has resulted in the loss of around 12 months of driver training and testing. Compared with 2019, 43 percent fewer tests were

conducted in 2020. Meanwhile, up to 15,000 European haulage workers have left Britain in the last year amid the Tories’ clampdown on migrants.

From January, migrants needed 70 “points” to come and work in Britain under the Tories’ new immigration rules.

Migrants can find a job on the Home Office Shortage Occupation List to make up these points.

And when applying for jobs on this list, they don’t need to prove they’ll have a starting salary of at least £25,600 a year when they come to Britain. HGV drivers are not on this list. If just-in-time methods of production and distribution are so vulnerable to shocks, why do firms rely on them?

A big reason is slashing the cost of storing stuff at warehouses.

But there’s also a deeper reason. Under capitalism, bosses have to constantly maximise efficiency to stay ahead of competitors.

They invest money into production in order to make a profit—and the sooner the commodity is sold, the sooner that potential profit is realised. The point of just-in-time, according to one of its supporters, is to “make value flow without interruptions”.

The alternative to this market chaos is a democratically planned economy for social need, not profit.

And workers have the power to fight against the chaos.

The just-in-time system is vulnerable—but not just to fluctuations in demand and supply.

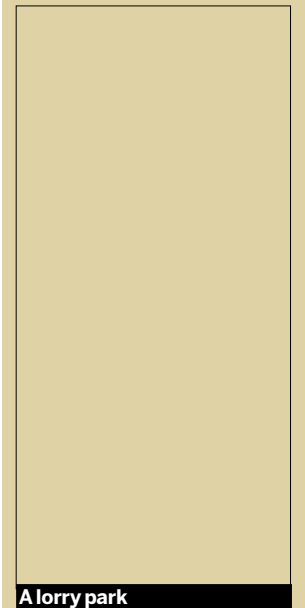
It gives distribution workers immense power to bring whole sectors of capitalism grinding to a halt.

Gambling with driver safety

SO SERIOUS is the shortage of HGV drivers that the Tories have written to the logistics sector asking for their support for plans to lift regulations and get more workers into the industry.

But this letter makes it clear the Tories will put the bosses’ profits first and driver safety second.

It calls for more drivers to pass the HGV



A lorry park

drivers’ test by taking one test, not two.

It also said that extra tests for drivers to be able to drive car, van and trailer combinations should be scrapped.

Becky Needham from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said, “Our view is that the test, as it stands, protects the drivers themselves, other road users and the public.

We would not want to have their safety compromised in any way by this proposal.”

Tory transport minister Grant Shapps also confirmed that there will be a temporary relaxation on how many hours lorry drivers can work, from nine hours to 10 hours a day.

HGV drivers purposefully have strict rules about how many hours they are allowed to drive and be on duty to avoid fatal consequences.

The truth behind why workers are really leaving

TERRIBLE conditions, long hours, poor pay and lack of facilities are all factors as to why workers are leaving the industry.

Even before the pandemic began there was already a shortage of around 60,000 HGV drivers.

This has prompted thousands of haulage workers to plan to strike on 23 August over pay and conditions.

One Lorry driver told the Guardian newspaper, “For far too many years we have been ignored, exploited and taken for granted.

“Now our time has come, now we have a window of opportunity to be listened to.”

Lorry drivers have been put increasingly under pressure after a decade of worker shortages, driven by an inability to recruit or retain workers. The

Road Haulage Association found that the average age of an HGV driver is 55. It also found that less than one percent of drivers are under the age of 25.

Part of the reason for this is that many companies refuse to take on those under 25 because insurance is more expensive.

There are also barriers to becoming an HGV driver in the first place, with training and

getting a license costing upwards of £5,000.

Lack of essential facilities is also prompting many to leave the industry. At times during the height of lockdown drivers were unable to access toilets or showers while on the road.

The result, according to Roadsters’ magazine, is there are an estimated 80,000 trained HGV workers currently working in different professions.

In the pursuit of profit, many logistics bosses have kept wages down and done little to improve conditions for workers.

What this current crisis shows is that a distribution system run with no thought for its workers causes chaos.

It also shows just how important one section of workers can be in keeping not only supply chains going, but the whole system running.

IN BRIEF

Liverpool strikers fight to save all jobs

A STRIKE at the university of Liverpool was set to go ahead on Wednesday if university management didn't backtrack on making six members of staff redundant.

UCU union members in Liverpool have staged a number of strikes this year to stop 47 redundancies being made in the faculty of health and life sciences.

After fighting hard, bosses reduced the number of planned redundancies to six.

But workers say they won't stop until it is zero.

●Send messages of solidarity to laut@liverpool.ac.uk
Send a donation to the strike fund at ulivucunews.org.uk/hardship-fund/

Royal Parks workers strike over low pay

CLEANERS AT Royal Parks in London struck on Friday of last week. They held a noisy and energetic protest outside Royal Parks headquarters in Hyde Park, central London.

The workers, members of the PCS and UUV unions, are outsourced to private company Just Ask Services.

They are fighting for improved pay and conditions, and the reinstatement of a sacked member of staff.

The strikers elected a negotiation team and agreed on further action to be taken if their demands are not met.

These include no job losses and parity of terms with directly employed staff working for the Royal Parks.

UPS workers could still deliver action

THE UNITE union suspended walkouts at the UPS delivery firm in Gloucestershire, which were due to begin on Friday of last week.

The UPS workers were set to strike last Friday and for a week from Monday over allegations of bullying and health and safety in the workplace.

The union suspended the action for talks with bosses.

But it warned that "if the dispute is not resolved" strikes will begin Wednesday, with further strikes scheduled through this month. It was unclear if the bosses and union had reached an agreement, as Socialist Worker went to press.

Strike shuts down Scottish airports

PROSPECT UNION members at six Scottish airports struck last Thursday.

Benbecula, Dundee, Inverness, Kirkwall, Stornoway and Sumburgh were shut to all but emergency flights when the air traffic controllers walked out. Bosses at the Highlands and Islands Airports (HIAL) say they need to "modernise"—meaning attacks on workers.

SCOTLAND



PEOPLE IN Dundee City Square demand independence

PICTURE: ALL UNDER ONE BANNER

Independence rally in the 'Yes city' Dundee

by ALAN BELL

AROUND 250 people joined a rally for Scottish independence in Dundee City Square last Saturday.

Protesters were impatient with the lack of movement on independence from the first minister Nicola Sturgeon, the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Greens.

The two parties—whose MSPs make up a majority for independence in the Scottish parliament—are unwilling to confront the British state.

Failed

They are rigidly sticking to legalistic, constitutional means to persuade the Tories to grant another independence referendum.

People's frustration was mirrored by speakers on the platform, who demanded "independence now".

The rally in Dundee, which

STURGEON IS laid back about independence

voted Yes in the independence referendum in 2014, was the first of four protests called by the All Under One Banner group.

It's a sign that the movement wants to get back on the streets, not wait on the SNP.

It was clear from many speakers and protesters that they aren't just fighting for independence for independence sake. People

want to build a different sort of Scotland—a Scotland without austerity, nuclear weapons and the hostile environment towards migrants and with green energy and jobs.

The next big demonstration for the independence movement is planned in Faslane on the 28 August, where people will protest against weapons of mass destruction stationed there.

The military base in western Scotland is home to the British state's nuclear arsenal.

●For more details, go to the Facebook event Rally for Independence- Faslane > For a Nuclear Free Scotland

●Further Scottish independence marches are planned for 11 September in Stirling and 2 October in Edinburgh. Go to Facebook events **March for Independence—Stirling** and **March for Independence—Edinburgh** for more details.

TRANSPORT

ScotRail workers still on track for regular walkouts

SCOTRAIL workers are keeping up their long-running Sunday strikes for pay justice.

Conductors, ticket Examiners and cleaners, who are members of the RMT union, are all involved in separate pay disputes.

They are employed by multinational transport giant Abellio, which operates the ScotRail trains franchise.

Some groups of workers have been fighting for four months.

Short

ScotRail Gateline workers, who work at stations, are set to take action short of strike from 11 August.

They have been instructed not to accept overtime work, higher grade duties or rest day working until further notice.

Meanwhile, the RMT has

released information from an internal Abellio report, which advocates service cuts, ticket office closures and job losses.

The union says, "It is crystal clear that this report has been commissioned with the sole purpose of attempting to legitimise damaging cuts to Scotland's rail network."

It added this would be "disastrous for passengers and a kick in the teeth for Scotland's key worker rail staff"

The document outlines a "unique platform" to "reduce staff costs quickly".

The RMT says the planned cuts would cause 85,000 annual rail services being cut and over 1000 jobs axed.

With bosses planning bigger attacks, escalating strikes will be needed to beat back the assault.

RAILWAYS

East Midlands workers conduct strikes over pay

SENIOR conductors in the RMT union on the East Midlands Railway (EMR) are continuing their solid strike, now in its 12th week.

They are fighting over pay, conditions and contracts.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said, "It's time for the company to stop playing

games and start respecting the staff who generate their profits.

"EMR should get out of their bunker, recognise the legitimate grievances of their workforce and start negotiations over a fair and just settlement to this long-running dispute."

TUBE



Tube workers during a previous strike

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Strike delayed, but action still possible down the line

THE RMT union suspended planned strikes on the London Underground this week to make way for further negotiations.

Strikes were planned in response to Tube bosses' plans to abolish the Night Tube Train Drivers' grade.

Some 3,000 Tube drivers would be affected with exhausting work schedule—and 200 jobs are under threat.

Bosses' proposals would force the drivers to work both night and day shifts, instead

of keeping a separate role for Night Tube drivers.

Workers still plan to walk out on 24 and 26 August across the entire London Underground network.

The mood for a fightback has forced bosses to sit at the negotiation table.

But workers should prepare for action until all attacks are fully withdrawn.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said, "This week's strike action is suspended, although the rest of the planned action remains on."

LOGISTICS

Heavy goods drivers walkout could hit over 1,500 Budgens and Londis stores

HEAVY GOODS vehicle (HGV) drivers in south east London are balloting for strikes over pay equality—and their action could hit smaller supermarkets.

Bosses at Booker Retail Partners—the wholesaler for the Budgens and Londis shops—raised drivers' pay by £5 an hour at its Hemel Hempstead depot in Hertfordshire.

This was in response to the national shortage of around 100,000 HGV drivers (see page 17). But bosses

refused to agree to a similar uplift for 30 drivers at the company's Thamesmead site in south London. The depot stocks more than 1,500 corner shops across London and the south east.

Failed

The ballot for strikes and action short of strikes opens in mid-August and runs until the end of the month.

Unite regional officer Paul Travers said, "Due to this well-publicised driver shortage, Booker Retail

Partners put in place a temporary uplift in pay of £5 an hour for the drivers at Hemel Hempstead.

"However, when we approached the company in regards to an uplift for our members at Thamesmead, the bosses refused.

"The drivers are paid a low rate of pay. The company seems to think this is acceptable and has consistently refused to meet our demand for a temporary uplift until pay negotiations start in September."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Battling bin workers of Bexley refuse to give in

BIN WORKERS IN Bexley, south London, were set to launch another round of strikes next Monday, 9 August.

Around 140 Unite union members, who are employed by subcontractor Serco, walked out over pay, victimisation and outsourcing on 12 July.

They have remained on strike since—and now plan to keep up the action until Sunday 22 August.

Bexley council has said it will not renew Serco's contract when it expires in October, with workers transferred to the new subcontractor Countrystyle Recycling on the London Living Wage of £10.85 an hour.

Failed

But the union wants Serco stripped of the contract sooner—and £13 an hour for workers.

Unite regional officer Ruth Hydon, said, "Residents in Bexley need to brace themselves for further bin strikes throughout August."

"While this will cause further disruption, this is entirely a result of Serco failing to resolve widespread pay issues and the mistreatment of its workers."

"Bexley council says it is desperate for the dispute to be resolved, but if it is



BEXLEY BIN workers on the picket line

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

serious then it needs to stop hand wringing and force its contractor into line.

"Bexley outsourced this contract to Serco and it can't now pretend that this dispute isn't of its own making."

"Until action is taken on the grossly unfair pay

disparities and action is taken to stop Serco managers victimising workers through its drug testing policies, strikes will continue."

■ THE UNITE union suspended two walkouts by traffic wardens in Ealing,

west London, set for Monday.

Some 45 traffic wardens—who work for subcontractor Serco—have been striking over union rights and an absence policy since early May.

Unite says bosses were "offering severance

agreements" to reps and members "in order to undermine collective consultation and also over the company's refusal to negotiate on their absence policy."

They were set to begin the latest two week period of strikes on Monday, but the first two days were called suspended.

This follows talks at government conciliation service Acas.

Unite says the suspension was to "secure a written agreement with Serco on bullying and harassment".

And to secure a "formal agreement that the company's absence policy" is only used as an absolute last resort to dismiss a worker".

But the union warned that, if an agreement wasn't reached, workers would walk out on Wednesday until Sunday 15 August.

■ COUNCIL WORKERS are being urged to reject a "woeful" pay offer of 1.75 percent.

The offer—made by bosses in the Local Government Association—is below inflation, making it effectively a real terms pay cut.

It is also well short of the 10 percent increase demanded by unions Unison, Unite and the GMB.

CLEANERS

Campaign to mop up mistreatment by Mitie

CLEANERS AT Southwark council in south London have launched a campaign against mistreatment at the hands of outsourcer Mitie.

The cleaners work in Southwark hostels, which house vulnerable people including asylum seekers.

The IWGB union members say some of haven't been paid for nearly 50 hours, which they spent disinfecting to make the hostels Covid safe.

● Tweet messages of support to @IWGBcleaners

■ TWO SEPARATE groups of cleaners were set to hold protests in London on Thursday.

Outsourced workers at the British Medical Association (BMA) and Facebook headquarters—who are also members of the Caiwu—union are fighting over outsourcing.

BMA cleaners, who are outsourced to City West, are demanding better treatment and to be brought in-house.

Similarly workers at Facebook, who are outsourced to Churchill Cleaning, are asking for an end to outsourcing and better safety measures.

And workers say they can no longer deal with the workload after Churchill Cleaning asked them to take on five extra floors while refusing to hire more workers.

● Join the protests 5 August, 2pm, 20 Tavistock Square, Bloomsbury, London WC10 9HW.

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

Cheers as the Big Ride for Palestine arrives

>>>continued from page 20 people were cheering us on and honking their horns."

Riders got a warm reception as they arrived for their finishing rally. The venue—a park in Tower Hamlets, east London—was significant.

Tower Hamlets council had denied the Big Ride permission to hold a rally in one of the borough's parks at the end of the 2019 event.

Council officials said it could be antisemitic because the Big Ride's website referred to the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

They said there was a "real risk" that the event could breach the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition.



RIDERS AT the park in Tower Hamlets, east London

The definition is used to silence such criticism of Israel because one of its attached examples says it could be antisemitic to call the state "a racist endeavour."

But the numbers of people joining the ride shows there is a renewed support for Palestine—especially after Israel's assaults and Palestinians' resistance in May.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign chair Kamel Hawwash celebrated the resistance sparked by protests against evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem.

"Things had been at a low ebb," he told the rally.

"So it fell to group of activists to start a hashtag—#savesheikhjarrah."

Celine, one of the cyclists, said the ride helped to keep solidarity with Palestine going.

"It's a good cause because we need to hear more about what's going on in Palestine—in the West Bank and Gaza," she told Socialist Worker.

"It's a good way to build solidarity and raise funds. One thing we can do to help Palestine is to raise awareness."

HEALTH AND SAFETY

DVLA workers strike to drive up Covid safety standards

A GROUP of workers at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea began a month-long strike on Monday of this week.

The strike by workers in the Drivers' Medical department is the latest action by PCS union members at the office in a long-running coronavirus safety battle.

More than 600 workers at the office have caught Covid-19 since the pandemic began.

Yet DVLA bosses have forced more than 1,000 of them to come into the office.

PCS members have fought a campaign of rolling action after government ministers intervened to scupper a deal that would end the dispute.

Action by those in Drivers' Medical has already caused a

A DVLA striker

huge backlog of applications for renewed licenses. Now a month-long strike could pile on the pressure.

● Donate to the strike fund. The details are: Account name: Fighting Fund Levy. Account number: 20331490 Sort code: 60-83-01 Reference: DVLA Send messages of support to responseteam@pcs.org.uk

ISRAELI SETTLERS MOVE TO EVICT PALESTINIANS

by NICK CLARK

ISRAEL'S SUPREME court was set to rule on the eviction case that sparked the Palestinian uprising earlier this year, as Socialist Worker went to press.

The ruling would decide whether Israeli settlers could force Palestinians from their homes in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

Two lower courts have already ruled that the homes of four families belong to Israeli settlers under Israeli property law.

Protests in May against the evictions turned into one of the biggest Palestinian revolts in decades—and shook Israel's racist apartheid regime.

The hearing had originally been set to take place in May.

But the revolt—including mass protests and a historic general strike across all of Palestine—forced Israel to

BACK STORY

Tens of thousands of Palestinians resisted attempts to evict Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in east Jerusalem in May

● These protests spread into towns in the West Bank that are under Israel's control. Israel attempted to brutally crush resistance, ordering airstrikes that killed over 200 people

● Now Israel wants to further push Palestinians out of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood by criminalising their existence

forces injured as many as 250 Palestinians in the West Bank on Friday of last week.

Soldiers fired rubber bullets at Palestinians mourning 20 year old Shawkat Khalid Awwad in the village of Beit Ummar.

Shawkat was himself killed when soldiers fired at the funeral of 12 year old Mohammed al-Alami, who Israeli soldiers shot in the chest the day before.

Soldiers also attacked protesters from the West Bank village of Beita, where Palestinian protesters are also resisting Israeli attempts to claim more land.

The protests in Beita and Sheikh Jarrah touch at the root of the Palestinian struggle.

Settlers

Israeli settlers want to use laws that privilege them over Palestinians to take over buildings in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of east Jerusalem.

These say that Palestinians in east Jerusalem can be evicted from their homes if the court decides the land was owned by Jews before Israel was created. And that's even if Palestinians were there for decades.

Israel passed the law in 1970—three years after invading and occupying east Jerusalem in 1967.

They are part of an attempt to push Palestinians out of the city so that Israel can keep a Jewish ethnic majority.

Once Palestinians are evicted, the homes are often sold or given to Israeli settlers.

Meanwhile, the families of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were expelled from their homes when Israel was created in 1948 are denied the right to return.

Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah during a demonstration to mark the 45th anniversary of Land Day in March of this year

Cage launch court challenge over right to raise oppression in schools

RIGHTS organisation Cage is challenging the Tory education minister after he sent a letter to headteachers stifling students' support for Palestine.

In the letter last May, Gavin Williamson said there had been an "increased focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in many schools," and a "worrying spike in antisemitic incidents."

The letter followed reports of children—mostly Muslim—being accused of antisemitism by school staff for showing solidarity with Palestine.

Cage, which defends Muslims against repressive state policies, has a dossier

of 47 cases of Muslim children being censored for supporting Palestine.

These include students suspended for wearing Palestine badges.

As well as details of schools that banned displaying Palestinian colours.

Banned

It also includes an example of a student being banned from an online learning platform for talking about Palestine with friends.

Williamson's letter said schools should "ensure impartiality" and deal with antisemitism "with due seriousness"

Now the organisation is appealing for a

judicial review against Williamson's letter.

Cage said Williamson's letter "amounted to censorship of political dissent in schools and discriminated against students by infringing their right to freedom of expression."

"The minister's intervention, although cloaked in concerns around antisemitism, had the impact of censoring views in schools that challenge the state-sponsored narrative on Israel."

"The aim was to set a fixed template within which pupils' discussion on Israel-Palestine should be conducted."

Solidarity with Palestine bike ride ends in London

AT LEAST 200 cyclists ended four days of cycling in solidarity with Palestine with a rally in east London on Sunday.

The Big Ride for Palestine streamed through the London streets chanting "Free Palestine" on the final leg of its journey from Bristol.

It was one of the largest and most successful events yet for the annual charity ride—coming just three months after Israel's assault on Palestinians in May.

One rider, Mohammed, joined the ride on the last day from Luton. He



Big Ride for Palestine

told Socialist Worker, "There were more people on the ride than we expected—and we got more support than we expected too."

"A lot of
>>>Continued on page 19



On other pages...

Tunisia in Turmoil
>>>Page 14&15